

Introduction

First published in 2002, ***Key Facts about Higher Education in Washington*** provides valuable information on the ways higher education serves our state and its people. The most current data and information available is presented throughout this report to highlight the *Key Facts* about Washington's postsecondary institutions, including faculty, students, budgets, and financial aid. The final chapter reflects major recommendations from the 2009 System Design Plan, which provides guidance to state lawmakers on policy decisions related to raising the educational attainment levels of Washington's citizens.

Higher Education in Washington

Washington's public and private colleges and universities make invaluable contributions to our state and its people. Our higher education institutions are centers of knowledge and innovation, powerful economic and research engines, creative wellsprings, and a force for positive societal change.

With the founding of the University of Washington in 1861, the state began a long-term commitment to providing higher education for its citizens. In the early 1890s, many of today's comprehensive universities were launched, as well as Washington State University. Throughout the 20th century many other elements of what is now a robust system of two- and four-year colleges and universities came into being.

The state's public higher education system now encompasses two major research institutions, four comprehensive institutions and 34 community and technical colleges. In addition, there are five branch campuses, 10 university centers, and numerous teaching sites. These institutions serve a myriad of state needs in fields as diverse as agriculture, biotechnology, chemistry, engineering, medicine, law, computer science, and architecture.

Washington citizens also benefit from the contributions of long-established independent or private colleges and universities, and religious colleges and universities. The state's independent or private institutions grant about one quarter of the bachelor's degrees and nearly half of the first professional degrees.

Higher education is a primary driver of the Washington economy. The direct and indirect impact of academic research alone accounts for an estimated \$2.1 billion in annual sales in the Washington economy. Higher education institutions throughout the state sustain and stimulate local and regional economies while providing the education and expertise needed to nurture future economic growth.

Despite current economic challenges, colleges in Washington are doing a remarkable job meeting the state's higher education needs. Enrollment was up substantially at public baccalaureate institutions in fall 2009, despite tuition increases of 14 percent. And the state's community colleges are accommodating record numbers of students seeking job training or starting on their way to a college degree.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board

The Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is a state agency governed by a 10-member citizen board to provide vision and leadership for public higher education in Washington.

Created by the Legislature in 1985, the HECB was formally established in January 1986 as the successor to the Council for Postsecondary Education. Board members are appointed to four-year terms by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The student member serves a one year term. The Board annually selects from its membership a chair and a vice-chair who each serve a one-year term. The chair and vice-chair may serve more than one term if selected to do so by the membership. The agency's executive director serves at the pleasure of the Board.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board serves as an advocate for students and the overall system of higher education with the Governor, the Legislature, and the public. The Board also collaborates with the public and private two- and four-year institutions, other state governing boards, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to create a seamless system of public education geared toward student success.

HECB's Key Responsibilities:

- 1) Develops a statewide strategic master plan for higher education.
- 2) Administers state and federal financial aid and other education services programs.
- 3) Reviews, evaluates, prioritizes, and recommends the operating and capital budget requests of the two- and four-year public institutions.
- 4) Establishes an accountability monitoring and reporting system to achieve long-term performance goals in higher education.
- 5) Administers the Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) college savings program.
- 6) Adopts policies that ensure efficient transfer of credits and courses throughout public higher education.
- 7) Approves all new academic degree programs offered by the public four-year college and universities.
- 8) Establishes minimum admissions standards for the state's public baccalaureate institutions.
- 9) Conducts statewide needs assessment for new degrees and programs, off-campus centers and locations, and consolidation or elimination of programs.
- 10) Provides degree authorization for out-of-state colleges and universities and some in-state private colleges and universities.

Quick Facts about Higher Education in Washington

- Higher education operating budget – 2009-11: **\$9.5 billion** (16 percent of state total)
- Near general fund-state contribution for higher education – 2009-11: **\$3.3 billion** (10 percent of state total)
- Tuition and fee cost at flagship university (UW), state ranking – 2008-09: **25th**
- College students receiving state, federal, or institutional need-based aid in 2008-2009 at institutions participating in the State Need Grant program: **144,230**
- Percentage of high school graduates enrolled in college within one year of graduation – 2008: **63 percent**
- Full- and part-time employees, Washington public colleges and universities–fall 2007: **62,000**
- Jobs generated by academic research – 2007: **16,000**
- Economic activity (sales) resulting from academic research – 2007: **\$2.1 billion**
- State/local tax revenues generated by academic research – 2007: **\$200 million**

Fall 2008 Student Headcounts	
Public community and technical colleges	266,703
Public baccalaureate undergraduate	92,379
Public baccalaureate graduate/professional	18,693
Private baccalaureates	48,949

Degrees and certificates conferred in 2007-08	
Public community and technical colleges	24,860
Public baccalaureates, bachelor's	21,641
Public baccalaureates, master's	4,715
Public baccalaureates, doctoral/professional	1,531
Private baccalaureates, bachelor's	7,883
Private baccalaureates, master's	4,105
Private baccalaureates, doctoral/professional	324

Questions or comments about this report may be addressed to Jan Ignash, HECB Deputy Director for Policy, Planning and Research. Phone: 360-704-4168 - Email: JanI@hecb.wa.gov

